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**DEDICATION OF NEW RESERVE AT KULANI IS  
HIGHLIGHT OF  
40 YEARS OF HAWAII'S NATURAL AREA RESERVE  
SYSTEM**

HILO – The State's Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> year of preserving the natural flora, fauna and geological sites of Hawai'i with the establishment of a newly dedicated reserve that expands the Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve by adding approximately 6,600 acres in the Kulani forest.

Designation as a natural area reserve gives Hawaii's natural heritage legal protection and active management. A draft environmental assessment for the Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve including the Kulani Extension is being prepared and will soon be released for public comment.

The reserve does not include the main campus containing the facility buildings and road accessing the Youth Challenge Academy/former Kulani Correctional Facility.

"Our newest natural area reserve at Kulani seeks to preserve its natural and cultural heritage for the public in perpetuity," said William J. Aila, Jr., DLNR interim chairperson. "The protection of the plants and animals of Kulani sustains the life of the *wao akua* (realm of the gods) of the misty upland forests, and important native Hawaiian cultural resources such as the ancient koa and 'ohia forests, and the Mauna Loa silversword 'Ahinahina, one of the world's most endangered plants.

"The forests also collect rainwater, purify Hawaii's drinking water, and are filled with the colors and songs of Hawaii's rarest native birds, including the 'Akiapola'au, Nene, and the 'Akepa," Aila said.



Ahinahina Photo Division of Forestry and Wildlife

The Kulani Natural Area Reserve is part of a cooperative land management organization called the

Three Mountain Alliance. This partnership protects the forests and rare species by removing invasive species such as feral pigs, which destroy native plants and spread weed seeds, planting native species, and monitoring the health of the forest.

Kulani NAR and Three Mountain Alliance staff offer educational hikes and service projects in Kulani, with the programs such as 'Imi Pono No Ka 'Aina which leads high school and grade school groups to native forest sites to learn about nature and help with restoration work.

The Hawaii Natural Area Reserves System contains 19 diverse reserves ranging from marine and coastal environments to lava flows, tropical rainforests, and even an alpine desert. Within these reserves live rare native plants and animals, many of whom are on the verge of extinction.

NAR designation helps continue the ongoing management that is needed to protect this unique natural legacy for the enjoyment of current and future generations. For more information go to <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw/nars>



I'iwi on 'ohi'a at Kulani. Photo permission of Manfred Kusch

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